

Sherman Phelps House (The Monday Afternoon Club Clubhouse)
191 Court Street
Binghamton
Broome County
New York

HABS No. NY-5544

HABS
NY
4-BING
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

SHERMAN PHELPS HOUSE
(THE MONDAY AFTERNOON CLUB CLUBHOUSE)HABS
NY,
4-BING,

Location: 191 Court Street, Binghamton, Broome County,
New York 7-

Present Owner: The Monday Afternoon Club

Present Occupant: The Monday Afternoon Club

Present Use: Private Club

Brief Statement
of Significance:

The Phelps House was designed by the well-known Binghamton architect, Isaac G. Perry. Before twentieth century alterations, it was an elegant example, both on the exterior and on the elaborately finished interior, of the Second Empire style in architecture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1868-69 Land conveyed to Sherman Phelps by three separate deeds: March 22, 1868, Broome County Deed Book 76, page 167; May 8, 1869, Broome County Deed Book 78, page 541; and Broome County Deed Book 87, page 348. These conveyances included Lots 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36 and 37 of the Weed and Whitney location now lying between Court and Pine Streets west of Fayette Street.
- 1870 House built by Sherman Phelps and at his death in 1878 inherited by his son, Robert S. Phelps.
- 1881 Robert S. Phelps died, December 14, 1881, and property inherited by two nephews, October 5, 1885, Broome County Deed Book 125, page 497.
- 1885 Property sold by warranty deed by William G., Francis R., Anna B., and Grace L. Phelps (Anna B. and Grace L. were nieces of Robert S. Phelps) to G. Harry Lester, shoe manufacturer, October 2, 1889, Broome County Deed Book 138, page 479.
- 1900 Mortgage foreclosed and property transferred by referee's deed from Albert Hotchkiss, referee, to John S. Wells, April 24, 1900, and recorded May 1,

1900, in Broome County Deed Book 170, page 354, all land known as the homestead of Sherman D. Phelps.

1905 House purchased from Wells by The Monday Afternoon Club, May 5, 1905, Broome County Deed Book 200, page 164.

2. Date of erection: 1870-1871.
3. Architect: Isaac G. Perry, chief architect for the State Capitol Building, Albany.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The house, built at a cost of \$100,000, originally had a third floor under a mansard roof, a porte-cochere on the north side, and fountains in the front yard. The interior is finished with various types of rare maple, walnut, mahogany, oak, and American walnut, and contains hand-chased cast bronze chandeliers, carved mirror frames, etched glass door panels, and patterned brass door knobs and hinges.
5. Builder, suppliers, etc.: John Stuart Wells was the builder. He constructed several of Perry's designs and buildings in Binghamton, including the Phelps' Bank, at the same time this house was constructed.

Orville F. Roth of Binghamton, a civil engineer, is credited with hand carving and building the famous \$10,000 black walnut staircase in the house. Titchener Iron Works of Binghamton built and installed the iron fence.

6. Alterations and additions:
 - 1905 Porte-cochere moved from north to east side and auditorium built on north side.
 - 1936 First floor redecorated.
 - 1941 Third floor removed and flat roof installed.
 - 1970 Beginning of interior restoration that is still proceeding.

- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure: Sherman D. Phelps was a former Binghamton mayor and banker and Lincoln Presidential Elector. In the 1890's the house was rented by James G. Truman, Binghamton Post Master. Harry Lester, owner of the house for five years, was the son of Horace Lester, head of Lester Brothers and Company,

a retail shoe store started in Binghamton in the 1850's. Upon Horace's death, G. Harry Lester reorganized the business as the Lester Boot and Shoe Manufacture and moved it to Lestershire (now Johnson City) where the company eventually became the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company. Since 1905, the house has been occupied by the socially active Monday Afternoon Club. It is considered a local cultural landmark and is a National Registered Landmark and has been designated a landmark by the Binghamton Commission on Architecture and Urban Design.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Copy of 1890 photograph in The Evening Press, Binghamton, Thursday, December 3, 1964.

2. Bibliography:

Binghamton Republican, November 14 and 15, 1878.

Harsha, David Addison. Noted Living Albanians and State Officials. Weed, Parsons and Co., Printers, Albany, N.Y., 1891.

Lawyer, William S. Binghamton 1800-1900. Century Memorial Publishing Co., 1900.

Rosenberry, Cecil. Capitol Story. Photographs by Arthur John Daley. Published by the State of New York, 1964.

Seward, William Foote. Binghamton and Broome County New York. Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., New York and Chicago, 1924.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Land records and family papers.

Prepared by Constance Werner Ramirez
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1338 Chenango Street
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October, 1971

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation of structures in the Southern Tier of New York State, undertaken by HABS in cooperation

with the Broome County Historical Society and the Valley Development Foundation, Inc.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The historical material was prepared in October, 1971, by Constance Werner Ramirez and Mrs. Clayton M. Axtell, Jr., of Binghamton. Photographs were taken by Jack E. Boucher in April, 1966. The project was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Constance Werner Ramirez, July, 1974.